

LSU Agriculture Faculty Council Meeting Minutes
9:30 AM, Friday, August 15, 2025
Room 212, J. Efferson Hall



Call to Order

Carol called the meeting to order at 9:34 AM

Attendance

In-person

William Afton, Giovanna Aita, Kayanush Aryana, Carol Friedland, Kevin McCarter, Maddox Miller, Vinicius Moreira, Jha Prashant, and Rich Vlosky

Online

Jennifer Duhon, Chirs Dunaway, Becky Gautreaux, Claudia Husseneder, Greg Lutz, Donnie Miller, Brittney Newsome, Jonathon Richards, Brett Wolfe

Absent

Michael Burnett, Bruce Garner, Michael Mamp, Mark Schafer, Sara Shields

- A. Remarks and Items from Dr. Michael Salassi, Interim Vice President of Agriculture/Dean, College of Agriculture – Dr. Salassi was unable to attend due to Summer Commencement
- B. Approval of Minutes
Vinicius Moreira made a motion to approve the June 2025 AFC meeting notes. Kayanush Aryana seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The motion passed unanimously.
- C. Guest Presentations – There were no guest presentations at this meeting
- D. Chair's Report
Theres been a lot of change this year. Changes in leadership, changes in Snap Ed program funding, and general uncertainty. AFC has an opportunity to step into a leadership role. Things may seem to be going slow, and it may seem like nothing is happening. The AFC Committee structure has allowed members to participate, have a voice, and become more engaged in everyday organization culture. This year is a building year for AFC. The effort invested now will continue to pay off in the future.
- E. Committee Reports – written report from each committee for inclusion in the minutes, summary from each committee
 - Executive Committee (Will Afton)

The executive committee met on August 5 via Microsoft Teams. The committee started revising the meeting minutes from the June 20, 2025, meeting. An agenda for the August 15, 2025, meeting was drafted. Will Afton successfully added all the approved meeting minutes from all 2025 AFC meetings to the website. The AFC member list is waiting for webmaster approval before it goes live to the public. The next executive meeting hasn't been scheduled, but will happen 2 weeks prior to the September 19, 2025, AFC meeting.

- Bylaws Committee (Vinicius Moreira)
The Bylaws committee didn't meet this month due to international travel. A meeting will be held in the next two weeks.
- Policies Committee (Jonathon Richards)
The Policy Committee didn't meet this month. A meeting will be scheduled before the next council meeting.

Kai suggested that the policy review LSU PS 69 (Research Misconduct) prior to reviewing LSU PS 104 (Dismissal for cause for faculty)

Chris Dunaway added a comment in the meeting chat about LSU AgCenter faculty, tuition, and fee exemptions after a recent organization email was sent out updating a new policy. CoA faculty receive both tuition exemption and fee exemption if taking a class. LSU AgCenter faculty only receive tuition exemption. There was an email sent earlier that caused a lot of confusion. Rich Vlosky followed up with a question on whether a split employee needed to have a majority CoA appointment for tuition and fees exemptions. Carol asked the policy committee to look into this and report back at the next meeting.

- Strategic Plan Committee (Donnie Miller)
The Strategic Plan Committee hasn't been able to meet with Salassi due to field work and administrative changes. Salassi has been in communication regarding this. There will be an update for the next AFC meeting.
Membership suggested for folks to schedule meetings with Dr. Salassi through Claire Bullock.

Becky Gautreaux asked the Strategic Plan Committee if there were going to be any issues with the latest plan and the loss of SNAP Ed funding. Carol asked Becky to provide a little background on the SNAP Ed funding issue. Becky responded that 40 people in the LSU AgCenter are affected. Some split appointment employees have merged with other funding sources to keep them on staff. Others will only be employed until the end of the year. LSU AgCenter regional units will lose F&A funds from SNAP Ed grants, adding to the chaos. All of this affects the overall work environment throughout extension offices. Jennifer Duhon added that the loss of

SNAP Ed funding will be significant because SNAP Ed funded a higher percentage of Nutrition and Community Health programs versus other federal grants like EFNEP.

- Work Environment Committee (Giovanna Aita)
The Work Environment Committee met on August 11. They are working with Frankie Gould to have the LSU Office of Ombuds be a participant at the Extension Summit on December 16. They will present on “Embracing and Navigating the Conflict.” Organizational issues and concerns are still coming in to the committee. The committee is ready to meet with administration and present a report.

Membership was concerned about possible room size for the Ombuds program and Giavanna will reach out to Frankie to learn more.

Concerns about the work environment were broadly discussed by the Council. Faculty from both LSU AgCenter and LSU CoA want to know why unit heads aren’t being evaluated. Faculty go through annual evaluations, yet there are no visible signs of supervisors being evaluated. AFC used to administer a unit head evaluation. Recent AFC Chairs, Joe Chang and Rich Vlosky were allowed to conduct unit head evaluations on behalf of AFC. When Matt Lee was selected as VP of Agriculture, he made the decision that unit head evaluations would not be conducted by AFC. The last AFC unit head evaluation was conducted in 2021 and can be found on the AFC website. An AFC member commented that they have experienced unit head evaluations at two previous universities. AFC should reach out to learn of any other universities who have unit head evaluation so LSU can be benchmarked with their peers.

Sometimes chairs and unit heads abuse their power and there is no check on this. AFC needs to push for some type of unit head evaluation. This would help improve the work environment.

There was a suggestion to utilize the LSU Office of Ombuds to start a conversation about this. Dr. Michael Brochu brings ombuds perspective and experience. AFC could learn of possible routes and avenues to move forward on this issue. This would make for good preparation in meeting with LSU AgCenter HR Department.

Another comment made the point that there is no verbiage in the AFC bylaws for conducting a unit head evaluation. The AFC is an elected body with a living document, AFC Bylaws, that provide details on how the AFC operates. These bylaws can be amended by membership after passing a majority vote.

F. Other Agenda Items

a. LSU Faculty Senate Election Update

Carol congratulated Rich Vlosky and Jonathon Richards for their contributions and leadership in getting the LSU Faculty Senate election completed. Carol created a folder

on the AFC Teams site with documents for the Faculty Senate election. Email voting has already begun. To help prevent voting more than once, each faculty was sent a unique link to place their vote.

b. Elections Committee Member Volunteer

Carol suggested changing the bylaws to add this committee. The committee can also handle AFC elections. Carol Friedland, Rich Vlosky, and Chris Dunaway were nominated to participate.

c. Discussion of Upcoming Guest Presentations

Guest presenters are not required to be LSU employees. They can be anyone from outside the organization. They don't need to be available in-person. AFC can accommodate guest speakers using Microsoft Teams. Please send Carol any suggestions for guest speakers.

d. Parking Daily Passes

Maddox Miller brought up an issue with on-campus parking during the executive committee meeting. The LSU AgCenter used to provide employees with a slip of paper to keep on the dash when parking at Efferson Hall, Parker Coliseum, and Knapp Hall parking lots. On June 6, 2025, Hampton Grunewald sent out an organization wide email to let LSU AgCenter employees know that there is a new parking procedure. When parking on campus LSU AgCenter employees now will need to access a link where they will input their name, phone number, license plate number, date, and times of when they will be parked. The old method will not be accepted.

G. Introduction of New Business

Kevin McCarter brought up a possible issue with proxy voting in AFC. Louisiana revised statute 42:14 reads that meetings of public bodies to be open to the public. Under RS42:14-part B states that "Each public body shall be prohibited from utilizing any manner of proxy voting procedure, secret balloting, or any other means to circumvent the intent of this Chapter". How does this apply to AFC and proxy voting, which is allowed per AFC bylaws.

RS42:16 provides procedure for executive sessions and that executive sessions are limited to matters allowed to be exempted from discussion at open meetings. RS 42:17 defines exceptions to open meetings. One of those exceptions allows for an executive session. Kevin is curious to know if AFC Executive Committee meetings could be interpreted as "Executive Session" meetings and therefore be out of compliance with open meetings law. We need to define "executive session" to make sure we are in compliance. The 2025 AFC is working hard to be as compliant as possible.

Rich Vlosky announced that there is a new version of the intranet available online. Carol followed up with a comment that the AFC website should have a link on the new intranet site.

2025 Meeting Dates – 9:30am-12:00pm/Room 212 Efferson Hall or Teams

Dates-Planned for 3rd Friday of Each Month. Meeting Invitations Sent

~~January 17~~

~~February 21~~

~~March 21~~

~~April 25~~

~~May 16~~

~~June 20~~

~~July 18~~

~~August 15~~

September 19

October 17

November 21

December 15 at LaHouse

Adjourn

Kai Aryana made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kevin McCarter seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 AM

